

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated July 23, 2009, claims 1-3, 6-8, 11-13, and 18-20 were rejected. Herein, claims 1, 5, 6, 11, 14, and 15 are currently amended and new claims 21-26 are added. No new matter has been added. Additionally, claims 3, 4, 8-10 12, 13, 17, 19, and 20 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 18, and 21-26 are allowable over the prior art of record. Further examination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 9, 14, and 15 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for determining claims 4, 9, 14, and 15 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 4 and 9 have been cancelled and have been rewritten in independent form as claims 21 and 22, respectively. Claims 14 and 15 have been amended to depend from new claims 21 and 22, respectively. Further, new claims 23 and 24 depend from new claims 21 and 22, respectively.

The Examiner has objected to the replacement drawings filed on June 30, 2009 because FIG. 5 fails to show intermediate member 16 and inside member 17 in a “cylindrical configuration” as described in paragraph [0026] of the disclosure. Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the drawings for the following reasons.

In FIG. 1, the intermediate member 16 and the inside member 17 are configured in a “cup-like configuration.” ([0021] and FIG. 1). On the other hand, in FIG. 5, a step portion 15b is provided on the inner surface of the outside member 15, and the intermediate member 16 and the inside member 17 do not have the “cup-like configuration.” In other words, the portions of the intermediate member 16 and the inside member 17 that form the “bottom” of the cup in the “cup-like configuration” of FIG. 1 are not present in the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 5. Therefore, since these bottom portions are not present, the intermediate member 16 and the inside member 17 illustrated in FIG. 5 are, in fact, cylindrical in nature. Regarding this, it must be noted that

FIG. 5 is a longitudinal side view. As a result, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11-13, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Welschhof et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,405,032 hereafter “Welschhof”). Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, and 18 are pending, and claims 3, 8, 12, 13, 19, and 20 have been cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended so as to include the features of claim 3. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection based on the remarks below.

Claim 1 recites, in part, a fixing means for fit-engaging an inside member with an outside member at an end of the outside member, thereby integrally fixing together the outside member, one or more intermediate members, and the inside member. This feature of claim 1 is not disclosed or suggested by Welschhof.

In the Office Action, the Examiner takes the position that item 17 in FIG.1 of Welschhof corresponds to the fixing means as recited in claim 1 (Office Action Page 4). Applicants respectfully disagree that item 17 in FIG.1 of Welschhof corresponds to the fixing means as recited in claim 1.

Initially, Applicants note that item 17 is not explicitly referred to in the disclosure of Welschhof. However, it appears item 17 refers to a filler material that is used to fill a space 16 between an outer joint member 7 and a hub member 1 (*See* Welschhof Col.3, Lines 15-30 and FIG.1). Hereafter, the filler material will be referred to as item 17.

Welschhof discloses that a circumferentially extending groove is formed in the inside surface of the hub member 1 and a circumferentially extending groove is formed in the outside surface of the outer joint member 7, and the filler material 17 enters these corresponding grooves and secures the two parts against relative axial displacement (Welschhof Col.3, Lines 25-30). In other words, the outer joint member 7 and the hub member 1 are integrally fixed together by the filler material 17 at the location of the circumferentially extending grooves. From FIG.1, the

circumferentially extending grooves are located approximately at the midpoint of the length of the outer joint member 7 and the hub member 1, respectively.

Contrast the above structure disclosed in Welschhof to the feature recited in claim 1 in which a fixing means for fit-engaging an inside member with an outside member **at an end of the outside member**, thereby integrally fixing together the outside member, one or more intermediate members, and the inside member. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Welschhof fails to disclose or suggest a fixing means for fit-engaging an inside member with an outside member at an end of the outside member, thereby integrally fixing together the outside member, one or more intermediate members, and the inside member.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over Welschhof.

Further dependent claims 2, 6, 7, 11, 18, 25 and 26 are patentable over Welschhof based at least on their dependency from allowable claim 1.

Further, it is noted that withdrawn claims 5 and 16 depend from allowable claim 1. As a result, it is submitted that withdrawn claims 5 and 16 are entitled to due consideration based on their dependency from allowable claim 1.

Therefore, for at least the reasons presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 21, and 22, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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